

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 /022 R

DRAFTED BY S/PRS:IPERNICK

APPROVED BY S/PRS:RLFUNSETH

S/S- MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 062204

TOSEC 775

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, H. A.)

SUBJ: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

NO. 34

TO AMBASSADOR ANDERSON FROM S/PRS

FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF ACTING SPOKESMAN'S RESPONSES AT
TODAY'S BRIEFING:

1. ALLEGED CIA INVOLVEMENT WITH SUNKEN SOVIET SUBMARINE:
FUNSETH DECLINED TO COMMENT ON ANY QUESTIONS RELATING TO
THIS SUBJECT.

2. AMERICAN EVACUATION FROM VIETNAM'S CENTRAL HIGHLANDS:
HE CONFIRMED THAT ABOUT 27 AMERICANS, MOSTLY NON-OFFICIAL,
HAVE BEEN EVACUATED FROM THREE PROVINCES IN CENTRAL HIGH-
LANDS.

3. GNV'S MILITARY ACTIONS IN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS: HE STATED
IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT SOME OF CONSIDERATIONS EFFECT-
ING GVN'S DECISION ON SUCH MILITARY ACTIONS ARE:

(A) A REDUCTION IN AIR AND GROUND MOBILITY RESULTING FROM
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PRESENTLY INADEQUATE LEVEL OF U.S. MILITARY AID--THIS

REDUCES THEIR ABILITY TO REDEPLOY IN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

AREA; (B) NECESSITY TO CONSERVE DWINDLING CRITICAL MILITARY SUPPLIES STOCKS IN FACE OF HANOI'S OFFENSIVE AND OF INSUFFICIENT U. S. AID. HE ADDED THAT WE DO NOT DISPUTE THIS GVN ASSESSMENT. FUNSETH OBSERVED THAT GVN WOULD NOT NEED MORE U. S. MILITARY AID IF THEY WERE NOT CONFRONTED WITH A MASSIVE BUILD-UP AND NVN FORCES IN AREA AND THE LARGE-SCALE INFILTRATION OF TROOPS AND SUPPLIES IN RECENT MONTHS. HE SAID WE HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OFFICIALLY BY GVN THAT THEY HAVE DECIDED TO NO LONGER CONTEST HIGHLANDS, AS REPORTED IN MEDIA.

TO A QUESTION ON AN ALLEGED DEAL WITH VC PROVIDING FOR A GVN WITHDRAWAL IN EXCHANGE FOR FREE VC PASSAGE BY RESIDENTS FROM AREA, FUNSETH STATED EMBASSY SAIGON SAID THIS STORY HAS NO BASIS IN FACT.

4. EVACUATION FROM PHNOM PENH: SOME PLANES LEAVING PHNOM PENH HAVE CARRIED SOME PERSONAL EFFECTS OF U. S. PERSONNEL, BUT HE DECLINED ANY CONFIRMATION THAT EMBASSY WAS DESTROYING ITS RECORDS. HE SAID IT IS NORMAL FOR AN EMBASSY TO REDUCE ITS RECORDS IN KIND OF SITUATION EXISTING PHNOM PENH.

5. SECRETARY'S TRAVELS: HE HAD NO COMMENT ON QUESTIONS CONCERNING LIKELIHOOD OF SECRETARY RETURNING HOME AFTER TURNING NEGOTIATIONS OVER TO SISCO OR OF A MEETING WITH GROMYKO IN GENEVA.

6. CAMBODIAN NEGOTIATIONS: (SPENCER DAVIS ALLEGED IN AN AP REPORT THAT SECRETARY WAS REBUFFED IN PEKING IN AN ATTEMPT TO GET NEGOTIATIONS ON CAMBODIA STARTED.) FUNSETH SAID HE WOULD NOT ELABORATE ON RECORD OF OUR ATTEMPTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL SOLUTION IN CAMBODIA AS RELEASED AND DISCUSSED BY HABIB TWO WEEKS AGO.

7. BRITISH CABINET DECISION ON EC MEMBERSHIP: IN KEEPING WITH OUR CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR CLOSER COOPERATION IN EUROPE, U. S. WELCOMES BRITISH CABINET'S DECISION TO RECOMMEND CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN EC. DECISION TO REMAIN IS A MATTER FOR BRITISH PEOPLE TO MAKE.

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8. POSSIBLE BREZHNEV LINKAGE OF CSCE TO SALT AND MBFR: DECLINED TO COMMENT AT THIS TIME.

9. UK DEFENSE REVIEW: (WE ARE PREPARING TO POST A COMMENT BASED ON AGREED UPON NATO REACTION.)

10. QUILAPAYUN FOLKLORE ENSEMBLE: THEY ARE A GROUP OF CHILEANS, WHO HAVE BEEN OUT OF CHILE SINCE ALLENDE'S FALL, AND HAVE APPLIED FOR VISAS TO ENTER U.S. AS MEMBERS OF A FOREIGN COMMUNIST PARTY, THEY ARE INELIGIBLE. HOWEVER, QUESTION OF A WAIVER HAS BEEN RAISED, AND IS UNDER REVIEW.

11. SOUTH KOREAN LAW PROHIBITING CRITICISM: AFTER BRIEFING WE POSTED FOLLOWING: WE UNDERSTAND SUCH A DRAFT LAW HAS BEEN PROPOSED IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, BUT HAS NOT YET BEEN ACTED UPON. OUR VIEWS IN SUPPORT OF IMPORTANCE OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION ARE WELL KNOWN.

12. LATIN AMERICAN BRIEFING: ASST. SECY ROGERS WILL BRIEF PRESS TOMORROW ON HIS RECENT LATIN AMERICAN TRIP. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE062204
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: IPERNICK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750096-0414
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750335/aaaabfee.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PRS
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hartledg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2003 by RuthemTJ>; APPROVED <23 FEB 2004 by hartledg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19 NO. 34
TAGS: OVIP, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: JERUSALEM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006